



# The Development of Political Activists: A Model of Early Learning

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- Susan A. MacMANUS, College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio 44115
- Richard M. MERELMAN, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin 53706
- Peter A. MORRISON, Population Research Center, The Rand Corporation, Post Office Box 2138, Santa Monica, California 90406-2138
- Daniel N. NELSON, Department of Political Science, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0027
- Barbara NORRANDER, Department of Political Science, San Jose State University, San Jose, California 95192-0119
- Saul SCHWARTZ, Department of Economics, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts 02155
- G. L. SELIGMANN, Jr., Department of History, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203
- Stephen H. WAINSCOTT, Department of Political Science, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29631
- M. J. WILLOUGHBY, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
- J. David WOODARD, Department of Political Science, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29631
- Bruce YANDLE, Department of Economics, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29634-1309

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS: TOWARD A MODEL OF EARLY LEARNING

Richard M. MERELMAN, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*<sup>1</sup>

Gary KING, *New York University*

An analysis of panel data reveals the unique importance of early learning to the development of political activism among Americans. A comparison of two learning models—the frequently used crystallization model and the newly analyzed sensitization model—is advanced as most appropriate for understanding political socialization and the development of political activism. The findings contribute to research on elite behavior and on the process of political socialization.

In a recent article Beck and Jennings (1982) argued that "for young adults in the late 1960's and 1970's, political activity was structured to a significant degree by the socialization process" (p. 106). Beck and Jennings reached this conclusion by examining the effects of parental socioeconomic status, parent civic orientations, parent participation levels, and levels of political participation among high schoolers in 1965 on rates of political participation among these same young adults in 1973.

Beyond its importance as an attempt to understand the origins of political participation in America, Beck and Jennings's article is noteworthy for its effort to reinvigorate the study of political socialization and development, a field which in recent years has languished because of difficulty in demonstrating that youthful political learning significantly prefigures the political attitudes and behavior of the mass public (Wright, 1975). By showing that youthful learning has an important impact on participation levels, Beck and Jennings raised the possibility that political elites may be especially influenced by early political socialization. If this is so, research into the socialization process would remain a worthwhile enterprise, even if socialization had little effect on the political attitudes of the majority of adults who are politically inactive. Should the socialization of political activists be a qualitatively more powerful

<sup>1</sup> Arrangement of the authors' names was determined by a flip of a coin.



ments of the crystallization model may also be found in Hess and Torney (1967:7, 149) and in Beck and Jennings (1982:94).

**The Sensitization Model.** Concentration on the crystallization model has diminished attention to a second early learning model that, although perhaps less dramatic or definitive than crystallization, may also be of significance. We call this the sensitization model. By sensitization, we refer to preadult learning which alerts future political activists to political stimuli in ways which only *appear* to crystallize their attitudes and behavior during the preadult years. But crystallization at this time proves temporary. In fact, early, transitory crystallization among the cadre of future activists may well pave the way for substantial later change. This is because apparent crystallization is but one phase in a longer process of becoming a political activist. As a complex structure of personal commitments, youthful political activism may be characterized by much exploration, many false starts, and substantial reconstruction of ideas and allegiances. Adolescent attitudinal crystallization, therefore, may indicate only the dawning of sustained involvement in politics, rather than the establishment of enduring commitments to specific parties, candidates, or ideologies.

The sensitization model therefore allows for the possibility that the more crystallized in attitudes and cognitive styles the activist appears to be in his or her early years, the *more*, not the less, open he or she will be to subsequent political change. Although preadult involvement in politics may occasionally appear to be accompanied by attitudinal or cognitive crystallization, this crystallization is transient and skin deep. Specifically, although some of the activists in our study may appear crystallized in their attitudes and cognitions when they are in high school, say in 1965, they will actually experience substantial change from 1965 to 1973. Both early crystallization and later reconstruction of attitudes become parts of a larger process of developing political involvement.

The sensitization model asserts that parents and other salient figures successfully transmit durable habits of political activism to the activists in the latter's early years. However, this process does not develop in the activists a stable core of political attitudes or cognitions. Rather, it produces a particularly open and flexible political learning style. The activists thus learn to learn—and learn *how* to learn—about politics, while keeping the *direction* of their political allegiances and the *content* of their political belief systems open.<sup>4</sup>

**The Null Model.** Some observers doubt that early learning plays any role at all either in encouraging later political activism or in explaining the political

<sup>4</sup>For a theory relevant to the sensitization model, see Levinson (1978) and Kohlberg (1969).

attitudes of activists. There exists an influential null hypothesis about the development of activists. This hypothesis parallels the null model about the development of mass political attitudes that Dowse and Hughes, Searing, and Marsh have already proposed. Indeed, Dowse and Hughes themselves offered such a null model about the development of political activists. After examining a large number of adult political activists in Britain, Dowse and Hughes (1977) concluded that "for activists . . . early socialization experiences are not very revealing as explanatory variables" (p. 104). Unfortunately, Dowse and Hughes examined recall data about family and occupational authority patterns. Their sweeping conclusions are therefore unwarranted, because early authority patterns are but one possible youthful influence on later political activism, and also because recall data on such complex phenomena as authority patterns in childhood are difficult to credit entirely (Niemi, 1974).

A more convincing statement of the null model draws upon research on party structure and political recruitment. From such research a plausible argument can be made that the amount and form of political activism depends more on contemporaneous opportunities for involvement—as embodied for example, in local party organizations, unions, and neighborhoods—than on distinctive youthful learning. Recent work comparing political parties in Europe and America highlights the importance of such structural inducements to activism (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978).

#### Political and Social Psychological Variables in the Development of Activists

In their major study of the data which Jennings and Beck later examined, Jennings and Niemi (1981) reported that youthful levels of political activity displayed continuity over the eight-year span they investigated. We agree. In our analysis of these data we find that 18-year-olds in 1965 who planned to be politically active were three times more likely actually to have become activists eight years later than 18-year-olds who did not expect to be active.<sup>5</sup> Thus, projected political activism was a good predictor of later activity, a fact which suggests the enduring impact in some form of preadult development.

Our task now is to conceptualize the developmental influences on these young activists so as to illuminate, and begin to distinguish among, our three developmental models. In so doing, two kinds of influences stand out as candidates for examination.

**Political Variables.** One set of variables includes political characteristics acquired in the early years and possibly related to later political activism. Consider, for example, the concept of political efficacy. Political efficacy expresses

<sup>5</sup>See also Jennings and Niemi (1981:46).

the individual's feeling of control over politics. It is related—though somewhat uncertainly—to the concept of locus of control, which expresses the individual's feeling of control over the entire range of his or her life (Scaturo and Smalley, 1980; Sigel and Hoskin, 1981; Carmines, 1980; Olsen, 1980; Clarke and Donovan, 1980; Sniderman, 1975). Efficacy may in fact be a partial offshoot of the developmental process associated with locus of control. More important, political efficacy bears a close relationship to various forms of political activism (Marsh, 1971), and is therefore appropriate for our analysis.

A second political variable is ideological thought as measured by consistent positions on several policy issues. From a developmental standpoint, ideological thought—conceptualized as coherence among issue positions—is a cousin of Piagetian formal operational reasoning (Tomlinson, 1975; Merelman, 1982). Although we do not examine this cousinly connection in the present paper, we do expect a greater percentage of future political activists than of nonactivists to think ideologically, primarily because the former's high levels of political interest should fix their cognitive powers on politics rather than on other things. Further, we maintain that enhanced ideological thinking among future political activists can serve as evidence for the influence of early development on adult elites, particularly inasmuch as Welsh (1979) and Jennings and Farah (1980) discovered that advanced ideological capacity characterizes adult leaders as well. Circumstantially, then, existing evidence permits us to construct a chain of continuity leading backward from the ideological sophistication of adult activists to earlier ideological sophistication among adolescents who are future activists, and, ultimately, to even earlier ideological development among these same persons. Therefore, we expect preadult development to encourage ideological thinking among future activists.

Partisan identification is a third political variable of interest. Partisan identification is a cognitive expression of the strength of connection between political parties and the individual. In addition, since adult political participation in America is closely related to strength of partisanship (Milbrath and Goel, 1977), it seems reasonable to expect youthful political activists already to have acquired a strong sense of partisanship via the socialization process.

**Social Psychological Variables.** A set of social psychological influences on development may also assume a unique form among youthful political activists. Consider adolescent extracurricular involvement, which, in a sample examined longitudinally from 1955 to 1970, effectively predicted later participation in voluntary associations among adults (Hanks and Eckland, 1978). Apparently a habit of social activity develops early in life and helps motivate later political action. A related finding emerges from the work of Olsen, who showed that integration into a neighborhood is closely related to adult political involvement (Olsen, 1980; also see Steinberger, 1981). We thus have some reason to expect young persons who become drawn into a network of neigh-

borhood and associational activities to become prime candidates for activism later on.

In this study we cannot investigate these social psychological influences directly. Nevertheless, we can still investigate *attitudinal* integration into the community, as measured, for example, by the degree of resemblance between the opinions and attitudes of salient agents of learning and the opinions and attitudes of the adolescents they influence. After all, viewed from the broader social psychological rather than the narrower attitudinal standpoint, agents of learning serve to integrate young people into the community as a whole. Therefore, if social psychological integration encourages youthful political activism, it ought to follow that youthful activists should resemble their parents and peers politically more closely than do nonactivists. Moreover, when the opportunity presents itself, youthful activists should be particularly attracted to peer groups which reinforce their emerging political interests and attitudes.

### Models of Socialization and Hypotheses about Activism

Our three models predict different courses of development with regard to these sets of variables. Specifically, under the terms of the sensitization model the impact of preadult learning, though crucial, cannot be expected to persist unchanged. In this respect the sensitization model differs from the crystallization hypothesis, which predicts constancy after adolescence. The sensitization model assumes inconsistency, volatility, and perhaps even "regression" among activists after the end of adolescence.

The difference between the two models resides in the fact that the crystallization model foresees a more rigid and complete "learning set" among activists than does the sensitization model. The latter sees early learning as producing only a lasting proclivity toward activism, coupled with strong motives to search the environment flexibly and imaginatively for a satisfying political stance. The former model envisages early learning as producing not only a proclivity to activism, but also a ready-made durable "package" of associated attitudes and cognitions.

More specifically, at time 1 (1965 in the case of the Beck-Jennings data) the sensitization and crystallization models agree in predicting that youthful activists will display unusually close resemblance to the political attitudes of learning agents in their environment, unusually well-formed political attitudes as indexed by ideological thinking, high levels of political efficacy, and high levels of partisanship. However, the crystallization model predicts that the levels of these variables will not change from time 1 to time 2 (1973). But the sensitization model predicts unusually high rates of change in these variables among activists during the same period.

The key test of the effects of early learning, however, is between these two models and the null model, which predicts no difference at *either* time 1 (1965)

or time 2 (1973) between youthful activists and nonactivists. From Dowse and Hughes's standpoint, early development has no impact at all on future political activism and can therefore tell us nothing about the development of political elites. Figure 1 provides graphic illustrations of each of the three models.

As Figure 1 shows, according to the crystallization model enduring political differences between activists and nonactivists emerge and stabilize by the age of 18, changing not at all thereafter. By contrast, according to the sensitization model initial differences between activists and nonactivists are subject to considerable change from 18 to 26, with possibilities for both "regression" (activists resembling nonactivists more at the age of 26 than at the age of 18) and "amplification" (activists diverging further from nonactivists during the ensuing eight years). Finally, according to the null model it is impossible to differentiate between activists and nonactivists at any point in the developmental process through the age of 26.

### Analysis

**A Typology of Political Activity.** While Beck and Jennings (1982) tried to evaluate the determinants of political activity—conceptualized and measured as a continuous variable—we find the typology in Table 1 to be a more appealing conceptualization. This typology relies on the same data Beck and Jennings used. However, instead of assessing quantitatively different amounts of political activity, as they did, we develop a typology which stresses qualitative differences among different types of adolescents. As mentioned earlier, the typology is based on both political intention and behavior. For example, the 58 adolescents (of the 1,332 interviewed) who both intended in 1965 to be active and by 1973 were active are "activists." This small, unusually participant group is of primary interest in the study. Relevant questions include the following: What distinguished activists from other adolescents? Are there specific characteristics of early adolescence which can assist in identifying this political type?

While activists are our primary concern, understanding the other types is also of interest. For example, what distinguishes the 22 percent of the sample who both intended not to be active and lived up to their predictions? How do these "apathetics" differ from the others? Occupying a middle position between the activists and the apathetics are those who intended to be active but did not become active—the "dropouts." We do not assume that this "middle position" is necessarily a halfway point on some theoretically continuous scale. Instead, we treat these adolescents—who constitute a majority of our sample—as qualitatively different from the other two groups and leave open to empirical analysis the possibility of an ordinal or interval categorization. A final category of political activity includes those who intended at age 18 not to be active, but later became involved. Although there are too few of

FIGURE 1

Three Paths of Political Development among Activists as Compared to Nonactivists

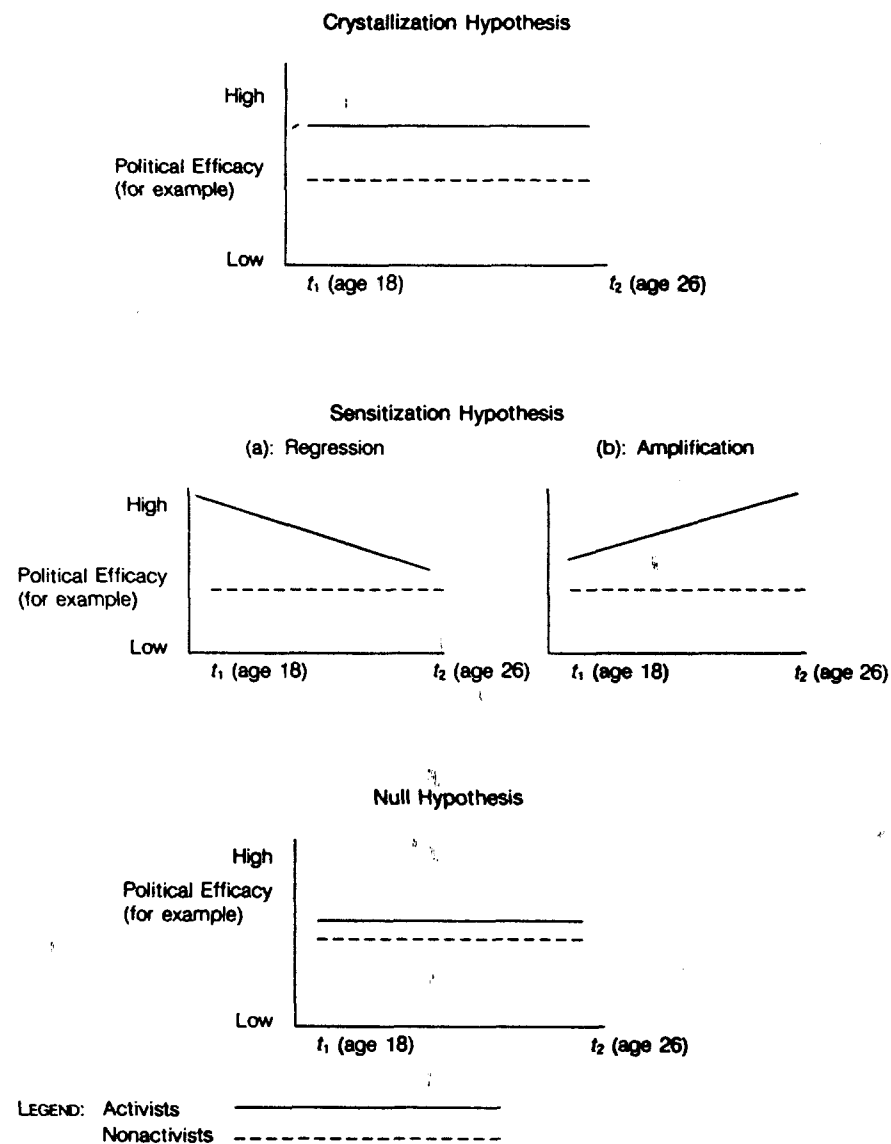


TABLE 1

## Four Political Types of Young Adults

	Intention (1965)		Totals
	Active	Not Active	
Behavior (1973)			
Active	Activists (58) 4.35%	Mobilized (5) 0.38%	63
Not Active	Dropouts (975) 73.20%	Apathetics (294) 22.07%	1,269
Totals	1,033	299	1,332

*Measures:* For all analyses, several definitions were tried, all with similar results. The following are reported here and used below:

*Intention* (1965): "Looking ahead to the time when you are on your own, what about public affairs and politics? Do you think you will be (1) very active, (2) somewhat active, (3) not very active." Categories (1) and (2) were collapsed for this analysis.

*Behavior* (1973): "Active" indicates participation in all three activities corresponding to an affirmative answer to each of the following questions: (1) "Have you ever written a letter to any public officials, giving them your opinion about something?" (2) "Have you ever taken part in a demonstration, protest march, or sit-in?" (3) "Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that during the campaign?"

SOURCE: A secondary analysis of Jennings and Niemi (1981).

these "mobilized" young people to include them in the analyses, they repay attention, for they comprise a group who have become active as a result of forces other than early learning. The fact that only five people fit into this category provides implicit support for the two early learning models.

*Explaining Activism.* The traditional way to do an analysis of these data would be to break down the sample into groups based on our explanatory variables (efficacy, party identification, etc.). The percentage of activists in each group would then be calculated.<sup>6</sup> We do present the data in this fashion, but our model has an additional benefit: It represents the effects of each variable, unaffected by the possible spurious influence of other variables. This benefit derives from the fact that the figures below are based on a model which statistically controls for possible confounding influences and alternative explanations.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>We find that, with a few exceptions, dropouts fall somewhere between activists and apathetics.

<sup>7</sup>The traditional method, in this case, does produce incorrect and spurious results. We apply a logit model to these data (Amemiya, 1981). Although a multinomial model was applied to these data, two binary logit equations are reported here because of easier interpretability and only slightly less statistical efficiency. (The only substantive difference between the binary and

We present an analysis for each of our two sets of variables. First is a set of political variables, two measures of political efficacy and one of ideological constraint. These provide the most important test of our models and provide our only direct method of distinguishing between crystallization and sensitization. Other political variables we examine include changes from 1965 to 1973 in party affiliations and voting preferences of these young people. These two measures help us to distinguish the crystallization and sensitization models from the null (random effects) model. They also give us greater insight into the precise characteristics of the activists.

Second are social-psychological variables. Here we examine the influence of reference groups—parents and friends—on the probability of becoming an activist.

The formal statistical analysis appears in Table 2. Interpretations of these results are presented in the tables and figures that follow and are described below.

### Political Variables

*Efficacy and Ideological Constraint.* Figure 2 presents the breakdown for three political variables. The first measure of efficacy fits the sensitization model quite well. Those students who by age 18 (in 1965) displayed high levels of efficacy (evidenced by believing that politics was not too complicated for them to understand) were far more likely to become activists than those with low levels of efficacy (2.3 percent compared to 0.1 percent). Although this finding fits both the crystallization and sensitization models, the two are distinguished by changes over the next eight years. Whereas only 3.0 percent of high-nonchangers became activists, more than 18 percent of the high-higher category became activists. This finding provides clear support for the sensitization model of activism. The high sense of efficacy acquired early in life created a psychological dynamic which resulted in a mutually reinforcing combination of political activism and still greater efficacy. Moreover, this finding also further refines the definition of that model by choosing option (b) under the sensitization model in Figure 1. Thus, according to this result, sensitization *amplifies* the activists' early socialization.

The second measure of efficacy reveals that those with high scores at the age of 18 are more likely to amplify rather than regress from this early socialization. However, in this instance, high-nonchangers have the greater probability of being activists (4.4 percent), a datum which is consistent with the crystallization model, and at odds most strongly with the null model.

multinomial logit estimates was that the influence of party identification was somewhat stronger in the latter.) These estimates appear in Table 2. In order to interpret these, predicted values were calculated, transformed to estimated probabilities, then percentages, and finally reported in Figures 2 and 3 (see King, forthcoming [1986]).

TABLE 2

## Explaining Political Activism: Logit Estimates

Variable	Activists vs. Apathetics	Activists vs. Dropouts
Constant	-5.34**	-4.84**
Efficacy (Politics Is Too Complicated)		
Initial: More efficacy vs. less	3.16***	1.34***
Change: More vs. less	-0.59	0.03
Direction: More efficacy vs. less	5.11***	1.85
Efficacy (I Have No Say in Politics)		
Initial: More efficacy vs. less	1.98*	1.68*
Change: More vs. less	-0.14	0.27
Direction: More efficacy vs. less	1.22	0.99
Vote		
Initial: Republican vs. Democrat	-2.05*	-2.48*
Change: More vs. less	0.61	0.01
Direction: Republican vs. Democrat	-5.82***	-4.70***
Constraint		
Initial: More constraint vs. less	1.47	1.68**
Change: More vs. less	0.67	0.40
Direction: More constraint vs. less	0.19	-0.79
Party Identification		
Initial: Independent vs. partisan	2.84*	0.95
Republican vs. Democrat	-0.36	0.65
Change: More vs. less	-6.45*	-2.74
Direction: Independent vs. partisan	13.52*	7.43*
Republican vs. Democrat	-17.11*	-7.49*
Friends' Party Identification		
Initial: Different vs. similar	-1.01*	-0.74*
Direction: Friends more Republican vs. Democratic	-1.41	1.18*
Parents' Party Identification		
Initial: Different vs. similar	1.01*	0.65*
Direction: Parents more Republican vs. Democratic	-1.13	-0.84
Parents' Vote		
Initial: Different vs. similar	-2.56*	0.12
Direction: Parents more Republican vs. Democratic	0.81	-1.27
*R-square	0.52	0.32
Chi-square (df = 23)	86.89	78.30

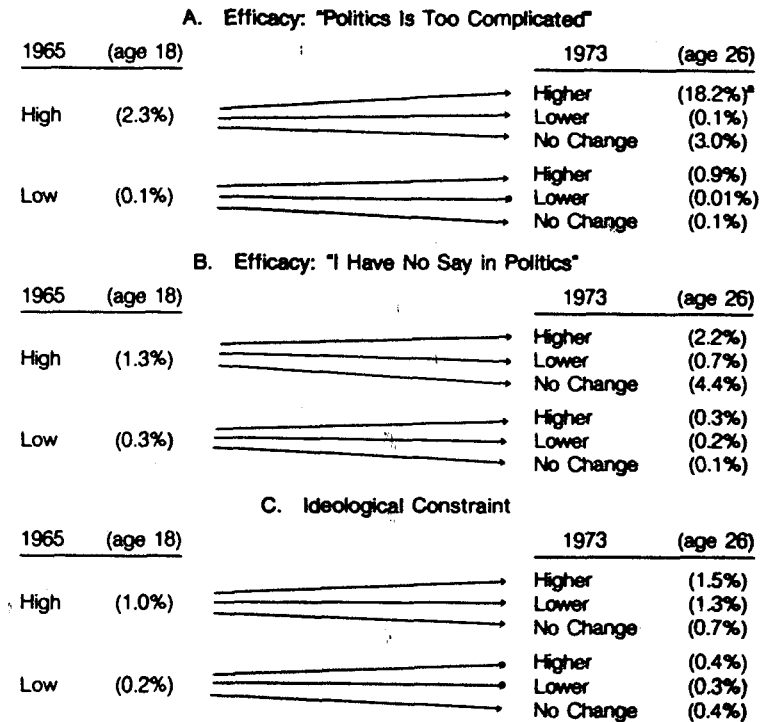
\*Coefficient is equal to or greater than its standard error.

\*\*Coefficient is at least twice its standard error.

\*\*\*Coefficient is at least thrice its standard error.

FIGURE 2

## Political Variables and the Probability of Becoming an Activist



\*The percentage figures in parentheses here should not be confused with the actual percentage of activists reported in Table 1. The latter percentage is the result of the "uncontrolled" effects of all the predictor variables, plus the effects of unmeasured variables. Therefore, percentages in Figures 2 and 3 and in Table 3 will not precisely correspond to the percentages in Table 1.

Ideological constraint (panel C, Figure 2) provides additional support for the sensitization model. Those manifesting high levels of ideological consistency at 18 are more likely to become activists. The subgroup with the highest proportion of activists at 25 are those (the high-higher subgroup) who have been sensitized early and later amplify this early socialization.

*Partisanship and Voting.* Figure 3 shows that those who are politically independents at 18 and those who later move toward independence are especially likely to be activists. Of the small group who consider themselves to be partisans at 18, those who move to independence show a tendency toward activism, but it is very unlikely that anyone moving from identification with one party at 18 to identification with the other party at 26 will be an activist.



FIGURE 3

## Political Preferences and Percent Activists

## A. Party Identification

1965 (age 18)		1973 (age 26)	
Democratic ID (0.1%)	→	Democratic ID	(17.4%)
	→	More Independent	(4.5%)
	→	More Republican	(0.0%)
Independent ID (1.9%)	→	More Democratic	(0.5%)
	→	Independent ID	(33.3%)
	→	More Republican	(0.0%)
Republican ID (0.1%)	→	More Democratic	(0.02%)
	→	More Independent	(3.2%)
	→	Republican ID	(2.4%)

## B. Voting Behavior

1965 (age 18)		1973 (age 26)	
Democratic Preference (1.3%)	→	Democratic Vote	(1.0%)
	→	Republican Vote	(0.1%)
Republican Preference (0.2%)	→	Democratic Vote	(4.1%)
	→	Republican Vote	(0.1%)

The effect of voting behavior is similar (even after holding constant the effect of party affiliations and the other variables). Those who prefer the Democratic candidate for president at 18 are more likely than those who prefer the Republican to become activists, just as are those who retain this party preference. Most likely to be activists, however, were those few young people who preferred the Republican at age 18, but then shifted to a Democratic preference at age 26.

*Social-Psychological Variables*

*Reference Group Socialization.* Table 3 presents data on the early socialization of activists showing reference group influences. Note that those young people who have party affiliations and voting preferences similar to their

TABLE 3

## Percent Activists and Reference Group Socialization (1965)

	Friends' Party Identification	Parents' Party Identification	Parents' Vote
Respondent is the same	0.8%	2.9%	1.7%
Respondent is more Democratic	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%
Respondent is more Republican	0.6%	1.4%	0.1%

parents and friends are more likely to become activists; as in the previous section, these results are contrary to the null model of political activism, for early socialization differentiates activists from their peers.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusions and Implications:

The development of activism and, later, of a cadre of leaders drawn from the pool of activists is of significant interest to democratic theory (Aberbach, Rockman, and Putnam, 1982). Democracies depend perhaps more than any other form of political system on the self-selection of their citizens into political involvement. Understanding how such a selection originates is therefore a useful contribution to democratic theory. The fact that only a very few Americans choose to play the role of activist suggests how important it is that we understand this pivotal group.

Our findings indicate that early learning contributes markedly to the development of activists. We discovered that (1) unless by the age of 18 a person had expressed an intention to become politically involved, activism thereafter was extremely unlikely (note the minuscule numbers of the mobilized) and (2) contrary to the null model, activists displayed a unique pattern of political attitudes as early as the age of 18; they were unusually efficacious and ideologically coherent compared to other political types, while, at the same time, being independent from partisan identifications. In short, they were self-confident and policy-sensitive, yet able to evaluate political events without tying themselves tightly to specific political commitments.

This evidence supports both crystallization and sensitization models about the development of activists. The remaining findings—those concerning the amount and direction of change in political attitudes—point toward the combination of the two early learning models as the most appropriate conceptualization.

We found that preadult learning permitted activists to change considerably later on, even considering their elevated starting points. Activists continued to develop as they became young adults. Moreover, not only did early development tend to sensitize them to later change, but it also excluded *random* change. Activists are distinguished by their propensity to move toward still higher levels of efficacy, more political independence, and greater ideological constraint. These findings add some specificity to our original argument, for we originally allowed for the possibility that activists would perhaps regress toward lower efficacy and constraint. The analysis suggests that activists changed in a direction consistent with their earlier history. They *amplified*

<sup>8</sup> Among the adolescents who differ from their reference groups, those with more Democratic reference groups are more likely to become activists. Since during this historical period activists tended to be Democratic, we take this last observation to mean that those who are to become activists have spent more time with Democratic parents and friends, picking up the values they will later espouse as activists.

their earlier development in a way the other types could not manage. However, while their attitudes did not cease development, they moved only in directions already predicted by the crystallization model. Put differently, they rarely gave up specific orientations acquired early in life.

Our research suggests that efforts to elaborate a fuller model of elite socialization are now in order. For it does appear that the development of activism springs from early learned habits of mind and character, and from a flexible learning set which makes continuous revision of political positions bearable within the context of sustained political involvement. Among differently socialized persons—dropouts and apathetics—vicissitudes in political allegiances and perspectives disrupt youthful dispositions to become politically involved. But to activists such changes only become new opportunities for involvement. This orientation to politics is early development's major legacy to activists, and is a chief vindication for further research into the development of political involvement in America. SSQ

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## EQUITY, ENVY, AND HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

Sandra R. BAUM, *Wellesley College*

Saul SCHWARTZ, *Tufts University*

Using the economic theory of "fairness" as the absence of envy, this study develops an empirical measure of envy in access to higher education. The results suggest that given the existence of current government subsidies, financial barriers do not prevent a significant number of high school graduates from attending college. Low measured academic ability is the strongest predictor both of low educational aspirations and of failure to fulfill expressed aspirations. These results must be interpreted cautiously because of measurement difficulties.

A growing body of economic literature analyzes "fair" distributions, which can be roughly defined as those distributions in which no agent envies the allocation received by any other agent. The theory has been praised as providing a promising tool for policy analysis (Baumol, 1982). Yet the theoretical work in this area has progressed with minimal attention to the empirical applicability of the theory.<sup>2</sup>

In this study, we test the extent to which fairness theory can, in fact, prove to be a useful tool for policy analysis. We examine the implications of the theory of fairness for the empirical assessment of the equity of access to the consumption of a single commodity, higher education.

Higher education is a practical choice for applying fairness theory to policy analysis for several reasons. It is frequently classed as a "merit" good, a good which should be available to all members of our society. Furthermore, federal policies for subsidizing college students are being widely debated today, the Reagan administration having proposed major cuts in existing programs. There is basic disagreement on whether all qualified students should have access to expensive, private education. But the idea that all qualified students should have access to some form of higher education has not been seriously challenged. It is,

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<sup>2</sup>An exception is Baumol's (1982) qualitative application of fairness theory to the economic evaluation of rationing policy.